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Operational activities of the United Nations for international development cooperation: progress report on the implementation of the triennial comprehensive policy review

Assessing the effectiveness of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system

Report of the Secretary-General**

Summary

The present report responds to paragraph 53 of General Assembly resolution 56/201, in which the Assembly requested the Secretary-General to continue to provide, in the context of the triennial comprehensive policy review, an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system and the functioning of the United Nations development system at the country level. An indicative work programme is outlined. Issues of methodology are summarized in sections IV to VIII. Future assessments will be independent, impartial and participatory. Key concepts are national ownership and the involvement of priority beneficiaries and of the resident coordinator system and system organizations. Capacity for those overall assessments should be strengthened. The report complements the information contained in the report of the Secretary-General on operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/2002/47 and Add.1 and 2).

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I. Introduction

1. The General Assembly has provided policy guidance to the United Nations system in the area of operational activities for development since 1977,[1] when the first sessions dealing formally with the topic are recorded. Since 1980, that role has been performed through the triennial comprehensive policy review, for which the Secretariat provides policy analysis on the basis of appropriate documentation.[2] The triennial review process leads to the adoption of key resolutions,[3] which have been followed up systematically by annual progress reviews by the Economic and Social Council.[4]

2. The triennial review resolutions established the fundamental principles, concepts, modalities and follow-up mechanisms that regulate the functioning of the United Nations system at the country level. Changes in the way in which United Nations country teams now work together and with their partners testify to the relevance of those resolutions and their impact on country-level activities.

3. The role of the Secretariat in the triennial review process has been to provide Member States with relevant, impartial and reliable documentation, policy analysis and recommendations on the functioning of the United Nations system-wide support to development.

4. In paragraph 53 of its resolution 56/201, the General Assembly confirmed that analytical role of the Secretariat by requesting the Secretary-General to continue to provide, in the context of the triennial review, an overall assessment of the effectiveness of the system's operational activities for development and of the functioning of the United Nations development system at the country level. The purpose of the present report[5] is to respond to the request of the Assembly to submit to the Council in 2002 suggestions to enhance such assessments, reiterating the objectives and criteria that drive them and laying out a collaborative strategy that will continue to involve the entire United Nations system, recipient countries and donor community. The report provides an outline for an indicative work programme for consideration of the Council. Issues of methodology are reviewed and summarized in sections IV-VIII. The report complements the information included in the report of the Secretary-General on operational activities for development of the United Nations system (E/2002/47 and Add.1 and 2).

II. The concept of assessment and its purpose

5. The overall assessment function outlined in the present report involves a systematic and objective analysis of the mechanisms for designing and implementing operational activities and the results of those activities. Its purpose is to consider the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of those activities and their modalities, and the capacity of the United Nations development system to achieve its objectives.[6] The ultimate aim of the assessment function is to improve the performance of the United Nations system in achieving its objectives for development cooperation.

6. "Assessment" can have several meanings in aid evaluation, depending on the contexts and whether it is applied to project, programme or strategic/policy analysis.[7] The overall assessments being discussed here are system-wide. They are concerned with trends rather than any specific activities and their implementation. As such, their scope and focus is different from appraisals or evaluations of projects or programmes, and from assessments intended as financial or operational monitoring. All those meanings are most relevant to agency-specific evaluation work rather than system-wide assessments.

7. To be policy-relevant, assessments of the country-level functioning of the United Nations development system require not only a historical knowledge of past achievements but also addressing the system's capacity to move forward as a catalyst for change. They recognize patterns, signs of change and trends, and address the capacity of the system to adjust to changing circumstances.[8] Therefore, those assessments should be continuous and dynamic rather than exclusively or even primarily ex post facto.

8. As noted above, the focus should be on synergies and coherence within the United Nations system, and not on performance of individual organizations and agency-specific operations or programmes or groups of programmes, although the contribution of each organization to overall results and the comparative analysis of various agencies as regards specific system-wide issues may be pertinent. Thorough agency-specific evaluations belong to each organization and their internal evaluation mechanisms. The assessment work of the Secretariat being dealt with here should not

The assessment function for operational activities for development

- The Secretariat provides the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with relevant, impartial and reliable documentation, policy analysis and recommendations on the functioning of United Nations system-wide support to development.
- The main purpose of the assessment function is to help those two organs of the United Nations base their work as regards operational activities for development on lessons learned from experience, while ensuring accountability of the United Nations development system.
- The assessments of operational activities are systematic and objective evaluations, which are intended to: (a) verify the value or utility of operational activities for development, (b) determine the capacity of the United Nations development system to be a catalyst for change and adjust to changing circumstances, (c) verify the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of its operational activities for development and their evolution, and (d) make use of lessons learned from assessments and agency evaluations to provide policy guidance to the system.
- The assessments of operational activities for development focus on system-wide dimensions of those activities, and on synergies, coordination, collaboration and coherence within the United Nations system at the country level.
- Country-level effectiveness of the United Nations development system has two complementary and inseparable dimensions: process and substance (development). The assessments deal with both at the same time in order to optimize the use of country-level mechanisms and modalities employed by the system to pursue development objectives.
- The indicative assessment programme regarding operational activities for development outlined in the present report focuses on the priority areas identified by General Assembly resolution 56/201, grouped in three main clusters:

  (a) Integration of operational activities with national development efforts;

  (b) Rationalization and enhanced functioning of United Nations development system at the country level;

  (c) Global and regional dimensions of operational activities.
- Key concepts for the assessments are national ownership of operational activities for development, their integration with national efforts and the involvement of priority beneficiaries in the development process, which are necessary conditions for the effectiveness, impact and sustainability of those activities.

- Future assessments need to be independent and impartial, participatory and rigorous.
- Participation in the assessments involves:
  (a) Recipient countries, their Governments, other public authorities and relevant parts of civil society;
  (b) Resident coordinator systems at the country level and United Nations system organizations at headquarters (including the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF));
  (c) Other development partners (other multilateral and regional organizations and key bilateral donors).
- The approach and methodology for carrying out the indicative assessment programme will be developed taking into account and drawing upon the evaluation processes and experience of system organizations, in close consultation with the the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the rest of the system.
- The Secretariat needs to strengthen its capacity to undertake assessments of operational activities, relying on a wider support of technical skills from the United Nations system, and external professional contributions from qualified experts and research centres of excellence of international reputation.

duplicate those efforts. Nevertheless, the interaction between system-wide and agency-specific evaluations is important since lessons learned from both may be of mutual use[9] and may complement each other.[10]

9. Similarly, the process and substantive dimensions of those assessments should be seen as complementary.[11] Process dimensions relate to modalities and mechanisms, and include issues of consistency, harmonization, country-level coordination and internal synergies within the system. Substantive dimensions have to do with the development contribution of the United Nations system and its relevance for the recipient countries. Member States highlighted both dimensions in guiding and making use of the Secretariat's analyses, although delegations may differ in where they place emphasis.

10. In drawing up the agenda for the assessments outlined below and devising an effective balance between the dimensions and their linkages, the Secretariat has been guided by a number of considerations as to the "primary users" of the assessments and the main purposes they are intended to serve. The primary users of the assessments are the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. The main purpose of the assessment function should be to provide policy-analysis support to the work of those two organs of the United Nations when considering operational activities for development of the United Nations system so as to ensure that their debates, deliberations and resolutions[12] can benefit from policy-relevant, balanced and objective assessments of the mechanisms and modalities employed to undertake United Nations system's operational activities and their contribution to solve the development problems that those activities are intended to address.

11. The assessments should help both the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in their guidance to the United Nations system in relation to both process and substantive dimensions and their relationship. Their findings as well as lessons learned from the past experience of development cooperation (the *learning dimension*) should eventually be translated into their recommendations addressed to the United Nations system. They should, at the same time, assist those bodies in fulfilling their oversight

responsibilities (the *accountability dimension*) through assessment of the United Nations system's performance as regards both its operational activities and its country-level functions.[13]

12. In addition to the Council and the Assembly, other possible interlocutors may benefit from the assessments: individual system organizations, their evaluation offices, their inter-agency mechanisms (the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) and the United Nations System Chief Executives Board (CEB)), recipient countries, donor countries, other multilateral organizations, non-governmental organizations and other civil society organizations. Although they are not the direct users of those evaluations, the relevance and usefulness of those assessments for that second group of potential beneficiaries should not be neglected.

13. A by-product of the assessments is to facilitate — by fostering transparency and accountability of the system — the mobilization of international support for the development function of the United Nations, by providing additional evidence of relevance and credibility of the work of its operational arm.

III. An agenda for the assessments: an outline for an indicative work programme

14. The "effectiveness" of operational activities for development can be defined as the capability of the United Nations system to support recipient countries in achieving better development results, integrating internationally agreed development objectives in concrete national contexts, with full respect for the ultimate responsibility of each recipient country to determine the development priorities of its own policies and programmes.

15. In the sixth preambular paragraph of its resolution 56/201, the General Assembly suggests that the effectiveness of operational activities should be assessed by their impact on poverty eradication, economic growth and sustainable development of recipient countries, as set out in the commitments, goals and targets of the United Nations Millennium Declaration and the major United Nations conferences.[14] In other parts of the resolution, it is possible to equate the concept of effectiveness with that of development relevance of the operational activities.[15]

16. In paragraph 53 of the resolution, the General Assembly also requests that the effectiveness evaluation be conducted in the priority areas identified in the resolution. Therefore, the assessment function will address such questions as:

(a) Are the objectives pursued by operational activities for development and the United Nations system at the country level coherent and consistent with international goals, such as the millennium development goals and national priorities, and are those activities effective?

(b) Are operational activities for development well targeted?[16] Do system-wide processes, such as the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) facilitate targeting, better relating the system's choices to the millennium development goals and national development priorities?[17]

(c) Is the demand by recipient countries for development support from the United Nations system evolving? Is the response of the system evolving as well? Does the United Nations system have the capacity, also through its country structures and its modalities, to provide an adequate response?

(d) Is the United Nations system learning from past experience of development cooperation to enhance quality and focus of its operations?

(e) Are operational activities for development nationally owned? Are they integrated with national efforts?[18] Are the target groups of beneficiaries of development cooperation efforts involved in the development efforts?

(f) What is the role of operational activities in enhancing capacity-building in the recipient countries?[19]

(g) What is the progress in the effort to rationalize the functioning of the United Nations system at the country level[20] and better coordinate its activities?[21]

(h) What is the role of operational activities in the context of the ongoing globalization processes?[22] How relevant and effective are they in that larger context? How are a gender dimension[23] or regional considerations[24] mainstreamed in the operational

activities? Is technical cooperation among developing countries making any progress in the design and implementation of operational activities?[25]

17. These are elements of a possible agenda for the assessments called for in paragraph 53 of resolution 56/201. A more complete list of priority thematic areas identified in the resolution is contained in annex II to the present report and in the report of the Secretary-General on the management process for the implementation of the resolution (E/2002/47/Add.2).

18. Future evaluation activities for the overall assessment of operational activities for development of the United Nations system will be organized along those lines, following the indicative work programme, outlined in the present report. The thematic focuses of the assessments reflected in the work programme have been grouped into three distinct clusters: (a) integration of operational activities with national development efforts; (b) rationalization and enhanced functioning of the United Nations development system at the country level; and (c) global and regional dimensions of operational activities.

Cluster 1
Integration of operational activities with national development efforts

19. Assessments in cluster 1 will look at the overall effectiveness of operational activities and the link between them, as well as such issues as national ownership, governance and capacity-building, considering both process and substantive dimensions.

Cluster 2
Rationalization and enhanced functioning of the United Nations development system at the country level

20. Issues under cluster 2[26] are the backbone of the assessment of the functioning of the United Nations development system at the country level, stressing such dimensions as country-level collaboration, coordination, harmonization, consistency and synergy. They include strategic instruments, such as the common country assessment and the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF), the simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, the resident coordinator system, thematic groups and joint programming. The links between the process and substantive dimensions (development relevance) of those issues are at the core of the assessment function in this area.

Cluster 3
Global and regional dimensions of operational activities

21. Areas in cluster 3 include links of operational activities with the United Nations Millennium Declaration and follow-up to global conferences and related goals; links with key manifestations of globalization, including trade, finance, information and communication technologies, and social dimensions; regional and subregional dimensions of operational activities; dynamic changes in the operational activities for development; as well as possible interaction with some other issues indicated under cluster 2 (e.g., the millennium development goals as objectives for the United Nations system and the evaluation of the common country assessment and UNDAF).

22. This indicative work programme will be further specified and operationalized on the basis of the recommendations of the Council and the consultations that the Secretariat is holding with Member States and the United Nations system organizations.

IV. Results-based management and effectiveness assessment

23. United Nations system organizations, like other multilateral and bilateral institutions engaged in development cooperation,[27] have made great efforts to reform their management systems, introducing results-based management or performance approaches. The introduction of multi-year funding frameworks has also been linked to progress in the establishment of results-based management systems. Comprehensively applied results-based management should also be consistent with the more extensive use of the programme approach (as opposed to the project approach), stressing the outcome of development cooperation instead of its inputs.[28]

24. Since results-based management favours a more strategic approach to planning, it can potentially enhance the quality of the United Nations system's assessments, especially with progress in the use of the common country assessment and UNDAF and the improvement of their quality[29] and the individual agency programmes, which they comprise.

25. The request to the Secretary-General, contained in paragraph 56 of resolution 56/201, to conduct an impartial and independent assessment of the United Nations system's use of lessons learned from evaluation activities, will stimulate further opportunities to examine progress by the system in making use of strategic and programme-wide evaluations.[30]

26. While those prospects are encouraging, it should be noted that the use of results-based management in system-wide approaches and strategic planning is still at its initial stage, and its full use for assessments of the operational activities for development may, in the immediate future, still be hindered by inadequacy of data and experience at the country level, methodological obstacles and the need to reflect results-based management in the common country assessment and UNDAF processes.

V. Impartiality and independence

27. Impartiality and independence are considered important factors in ensuring the credibility of any assessment or evaluation function. Both the Assembly and the Council should be able to rely on impartial information and dependable sources and methodologically unbiased analyses. The independence of that function from the management structures that are in charge of planning and executing operational activities ensures its legitimacy and avoids potential conflict of interest. Transparency, frankness and openness should be components of the communication from the Secretariat to Member States.[31]

28. The credibility of and accountability for the assessment function require that a clearly identifiable, single office assume responsibility for undertaking it on behalf of the Secretary-General, who has ultimate responsibility for the substantive servicing of intergovernmental bodies. That also ensures a balanced approach based on the broad consensus reflected in the resolutions on triennial comprehensive policy reviews. On that basis, the Secretariat function for undertaking the overall assessments is exercised by a unit which is part of the structure of the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, which is itself responsible for substantive support to the General Assembly and Economic and Social Council and is not as such involved in operational activities.[32] Its assessment function is undertaken separately from coordinating structures, such as UNDG and CEB (as well as its predecessor, ACC), although the unit concern actively collaborates with both structures.

29. However, as the evaluation literature demonstrates,[33] an excessive emphasis on independence in all aspects of the process, even if desirable to promote transparency and accountability, can be counterproductive and can damage the climate of collaboration and partnership with system organizations and national Governments, discouraging their ownership of the evaluation results. It is therefore essential that assessments are carried out in consultation and collaboration with all relevant partners at each stage, and that results are shared with and acted on by them.

30. The notion of independence here is consistent with the use of external sources of research excellence (research centres, universities, etc.), which can be used to provide substantive support and technical inputs to the assessment work. Use of such sources of excellence, which have expertise of the required quality and background, is one means to enhance credibility and reliability of the assessment work. In that case, the combination of the responsibility for the Secretary-General's report on the triennial review, the transparency of the process of preparing and carrying out the assessment, the consultation with Member States and the United Nations system, the use of centres of excellence and independent and balanced expert advice, and the prompt diffusion of any results to public and academic scrutiny should all tend towards a high quality, balanced and useful product.

VI. Participatory approach

31. An essential condition to enhance quality is the establishment of an effective dialogue with the key interlocutors that intervene in the development cooperation relationships, adopting a participatory approach to the evaluation.

32. Whereas the credibility of the assessments requires the organizational independence of the assessment function, their relevance requires that their outcome (findings and conclusions) take into account the views of relevant stakeholders, who are expected to be more actively involved in the evaluation process through consultations and various other forms of

participation.[34] Such participation applies to the following interlocutors:

(a) Recipient countries, their Governments, other public authorities and relevant parts of the civil society;

(b) The United Nations country teams and the resident coordinator system for each country (including organizations with no country representation and, where relevant, the World Bank and IMF);

(c) Other external partners represented at the country level, including other multilateral and regional development or financial organizations, key bilateral donors and their agencies.[35]

33. The principle of a participatory approach also requires the direct involvement of representatives of headquarters of system organizations in the preparation of the assessment work, including an active response from their evaluation units.

VII. Some lessons from the past

34. The experience of the last 12 years in assessing operational activities and the two series of impact evaluations undertaken in response to the General Assembly's requests in its resolutions 50/120 and 53/192, show that future assessments may benefit, both methodologically and operationally, from the lessons learned and insights gained from the experience.[36]

35. It may be noted that the impact evaluations were one of an array of sources for the knowledge and policy analysis for the Secretary-General's reports on operational activities. The last three reports for the triennial review made considerable progress in suggesting criteria for making judgments about the effectiveness of operational activities. They focused on the dynamic processes that the United Nations system support to development has helped to set in motion. The attention on changing processes is an achievement that should be further consolidated through a continuation of efforts to stress such dimensions as coherence, directions, dynamics and relevance. At the present stage, there is scope for an important contribution from the United Nations system, notably the specialized agencies, in suggesting concrete criteria and indicators for judging the effectiveness and impacts of their operational activities, drawing on their particular stores of expertise and experience. Future assessments will seek to benefit from that relatively untapped potential.

36. Those studies also brought to light some methodological and organizational difficulties that are intrinsic in evaluation efforts in this area. Future orientations of the overall assessment function may benefit from the lessons learned in those exercises.[37] One of the major obstacles faced by an overall assessment of the operational activities is the breadth and complexity of the problems addressed in order to identify the "impact" of the United Nations system. There is little agreement on common standards to identify achievements or a universally accepted methodology for system-wide country-level evaluations, making it difficult to compare performance across regions and countries. All-encompassing concepts of development impact of operational activities, including their impact on capacity-building and/or poverty eradication, could not be easily observed and monitored through synthetic indicators.[38]

VIII. Multiplicity of tools and approaches

37. The methodology for conducting overall assessments in the area of operational activities is based on a multiplicity of analytical tools, instruments and approaches, including desk reviews, universal collection of information and extensive consultations from all system organizations (both at the headquarters and country levels), Member States (both donors and recipients) and other sources. Taking into account the fact that evidence of the effectiveness of operational activities is available most widely at the country level,[39] those instruments are complemented with other consultative processes: field missions, in-country workshops, subregional and regional consultative meetings, sample analysis, cross-country studies, thematic background studies, and ad hoc consultative gatherings (retreats, workshops, seminars, conferences, panels).[40] A combination of a selective use of some of those instruments and a joint effort to analyse the results of evaluation of system organizations should help to move the overall assessment function into a new phase of greater relevance and applicability of results.[41]

38. Future evaluations need to ensure that:

(a) The conditions of independence and impartiality analysed in section V above are fully met;

(b) The assessments are conducted using a fully participatory approach, focusing on collaborative consultative processes;

(c) The assessments are prepared and conducted meeting rigorous methodological standards;[42]

(d) The functional capacity to undertake those tasks is strengthened, by relying on wider use of human resources and the expertise available within the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the United Nations system, and accessing the external services of qualified consultants and research centres of excellent reputation, as required;

(e) Adequate financial resources are made available, both through the regular budget and extrabudgetary contributions, in order to carry out the overall assessment function.

39. The participatory approach of the assessment would include the following arrangements:

(a) Full involvement of Governments of the developing countries, United Nations system organizations and other national and international stakeholders, also through intensive use of networks;

(b) Follow-up mechanisms (online debates or other interactive initiatives with national Governments and United Nations system organizations, possibly extended to other partners);

(c) Better feedback from both recipient countries and system organizations on lessons learned through the assessments;

(d) Promotion of a series of country and regional assessment activities and consultation processes leading to a comprehensive assessment at the end of the three-year triennial review cycle.

40. The assessments undertaken by the Secretariat could be complemented with a series of other alternative initiatives:[43]

(a) Self-assessment processes promoted by Governments or local communities, supported by the United Nations system;

(b) Evaluation studies of the system-wide impact of operational activities, undertaken by national authorities and country teams;

(c) Concurrent or parallel evaluations promoted by other international actors (bilateral donors or international financial institutions) in programme areas of specific interest;

(d) Other capacity-building initiatives in the area of monitoring and evaluation.

Notes

[1] See General Assembly resolution 32/197, in particular para. 5 (d) and sect. V on operational activities in the annex.

[2] See General Assembly resolution 35/81.

[3] In the last 12 years, resolutions that represent major breakthroughs in this area are General Assembly resolutions 44/211, 47/199, 50/120, 53/192 and 56/201.

[4] See General Assembly resolution 48/162, which concentrated the work of the Assembly on operational activities in the triennial review years, attributing the responsibility of the annual progress reviews to the Economic and Social Council only. It is indeed only starting from 1993 that the Council — responding to its oversight role on the system operations in the economic and social domain — has become the place to conduct annual progress reviews of the implementation of Assembly resolutions on operational activities. Before 1993, the Assembly also used to have, in addition to the triennial review, annual sessions on operational activities for progress reviews.

[5] In paragraph 53 of its resolution 56/201, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General to submit to the Economic and Social Council, at its substantive session of 2002, in consultation with Member States and on the basis of the experience acquired with the impact evaluation studies, suggestions on how to strengthen the modalities and enhance the approach for such an overall assessment, particularly in the areas identified in the resolution.

[6] See sect. IV on the concept of effectiveness assumed in General Assembly resolution 56/201. Effectiveness, efficiency, impact, sustainability and relevance of development cooperation activities are fundamental criteria in any evaluation of development assistance activities. Several system organizations and other multilateral and bilateral agencies make use of them. See, for example, the results of a workshop conducted in Vienna in 1999 by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD)/Development

Assistance Committee (DAC), which singled out their use in evaluating the country programmes of both bilateral donors and some multilateral agencies, in DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, "Evaluating country programmes", (Paris, 1999), issue No. 2 of the OECD/DAC Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness series. For their extensive use within bilateral agencies, see, for example, Danish Agency for Development Assistance, "Guidelines for evaluation", (February 1994), and Spain, Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, "Methodology of evaluation for the Spanish Cooperation" (June 1998). Those evaluation criteria are often formulated in a way that they only apply to project-level evaluations, although they have been extensively used also in the evaluation of programmes, sectors, country programmes, specific aid forms or modalities and in thematic evaluations.

[7] There is an extensive literature on this issue; for a traditional classification of various definitions of impact assessment as used in multilateral development assistance, see, for example, United Kingdom Department for International Development, "Impact assessment in multilateral development institutions" (London, August 1998), box 1.1.

[8] The Secretary-General reports for the triennial review in 1995, 1998 and 2001 focused on the evolution of United Nations development support to developing countries and its trends in order to provide better policy guidance for the future, thereby confirming that dynamic approach in assessing the system.

[9] The Secretariat is expected to make the fullest use of the evaluations and studies launched by United Nations system organizations, intensifying its interaction with their evaluation units or offices and with the Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation.

[10] Such interaction with the evaluation experience applies also to other actors, in particular development institutions, such as other multilateral institutions and bilateral donors, relevant entities in recipient countries, development research institutions of international standing, both from the North and the South, academic institutions, and individual scholars or development experts of confirmed international reputation. It should also include the work on aid effectiveness undertaken by the DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation.

[11] Processes in operational activities are not ends in themselves. Analysing them as if they were would obviously distort any assessment exercise and greatly limit its policy relevance. At the same time, the focus of the work of the Assembly and the Council when debating operational activities is not on development policies as such but on ways and means through which the system can contribute to the development processes in recipient countries by letting its operational arm adopt appropriate mechanisms and modalities. In the past 12 years, both dimensions -- process and substance — have been addressed in the analysis conducted by the Secretariat as essential components of the assessment.

[12] The Secretariat is also responsible to help disseminate the principles and concepts agreed by the Assembly and the Council in their resolutions to the United Nations system, as part of its responsibility for monitoring the implementation of those resolutions.

[13] Both learning and accountability are key purposes of all evaluation activities in the area of development cooperation, as recognized at the international level; see, for example, OECD/DAC, "Principles for evaluation of development assistance" (Paris, 1991), sect. II, "Purpose of evaluation" (OECD/GD (91) 208), and DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, "Evaluation feedback for effective learning and accountability" (Paris, 2001), issue No. 5 of the OECD/DAC Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness series.

[14] The concept is reinforced by operative paragraph 8, of the resolution, in which the General Assembly also stresses that the United Nations development system should assist programme countries in addressing the goals and targets identified by the Millennium Declaration and the outcomes and commitments of relevant major United Nations conferences, in the context of the current challenges and opportunities of globalization. From the text of the fifth preambular paragraph of the resolution, it is clear that the General Assembly refers to "impact" and "effectiveness" as interchangeable concepts in the resolution.

[15] Paragraph 9 of the resolution highlights the need to improve the functioning and the impact of the operational activities for development of the United Nations system, and stresses the need of increasing the relevance of the United Nations operational activities for development.

[16] See World Bank, "The role and effectiveness of development assistance: lessons from World Bank experience", research paper submitted to the International Conference on Financing for Development, Monterrey, Mexico, 16-22 March 2002.

[17] See United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), "Development effectiveness: review of evaluation evidence" (November 2001).

[18] See, for example, UNDP, loc. cit., chap. IV; see also para. 7 of General Assembly resolution 56/201, which stresses that the United Nations development system, in order to ensure national ownership of its operational activities for development, should integrate its country-level operations with national policies and programmes for development and poverty eradication, including, as appropriate, national poverty reduction strategies, under the leadership of the Government.

[19] Section III of General Assembly resolution 56/201 (paras. 28–32) is devoted to the promotion of capacity-building, as the lead objective of operational activities.

[20] See, for example, the seventh preambular paragraph of General Assembly resolution 56/201, which highlights the importance of the efforts undertaken to rationalize and to improve the functioning and impact of United Nations funds, programmes and specialized agencies.

[21] See General Assembly resolution 56/201, para. 5.

[22] Ibid., paras. 11 and 13.

[23] Ibid., paras. 85 and 87.

[24] Ibid., sect. XII, para. 88, and analogous provisions of previous resolutions.

[25] Ibid., sect. XIII.

[26] They are the main concerns on operational activities for most Member States, in particular donors, although recipient countries have also repeatedly manifested interest in this area (e.g., on such issues as transaction costs and harmonization of procedures).

[27] For an overview of this experience, see Annette Binnendijk "Results-based management in the development cooperation agencies: a review of experience", executive summary, DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation (Paris, 2001); available on the web site of OECD/DAC.

[28] See UNDP, loc. cit.

[29] Results-based management may facilitate system-wide evaluations of operational activities for development, if they provide clearer evidence of well-defined objectives or results, greater use of observable and where possible measurable indicators to measure progress, established baselines with explicit targets for each of them, thereby facilitating performance monitoring of the various components of the system. The evaluation of the common country assessment and UNDAF requested for the year 2004 represents an opportunity to measure progress in that direction.

[30] Through that evaluation and the assessment of the common country assessment and UNDAF for 2004, it will also be possible to review progress in the evaluation of the country programmes by each agency and its possible interaction with system-wide exercises. On that issue see the results of a workshop conducted in Vienna in 1999 by OECD/DAC, which reviewed the experience in evaluating country programmes, both among bilateral donors and some multilateral agencies, in DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, "Evaluating country programmes" (Paris, 1999), issue No. 2 of the OECD/DAC Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness series.

[31] That point was also made in the context the OECD/DAC reflection on the evaluation feedback from political audiences, such as parliaments, ministers and governing bodies of multilateral agencies. See on this point, DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation "Evaluation feedback for effective learning and accountability" chap. 4. This is in conformity with the DAC principles of evaluation. See OECD/DAC, "Principles for evaluation of development assistance" (Paris, November 1991, sect. III).

[32] This unit is the Development Cooperation Policy Branch of the Division for Economic and Social Council Support and Coordination.

[33] See, for example, DAC Working Party on Aid Evaluation, "Evaluation feedback for effective learning and accountability" (Paris, 2001), and OECD/DAC, "Review of the DAC principles for evaluation of development assistance" (Paris, 1998). The latter noted that the principle of independence can be overplayed. As the users of evaluations have pointed out, too much independence, in practice, can be self-defeating, with the result that recommendations and lessons of evaluation are not taken seriously. The principle of independence has to be balanced with the interest in promoting ownership of the evaluation products and their recommendations. At the same time, if accountability and not lessons is the primary purpose of an evaluation, then the independence function is critical.

[34] That point was clearly stated in OECD/DAC, "Review of the DAC principles for evaluation of development assistance" (Paris, 1998).

[35] Participation of all those partners in the assessment function can take different forms, from simple consultation and involvement in joint meetings to a direct involvement in the assessment work in the forms of joint, collaborative, participatory and parallel evaluations, including joint United Nations/multi-donor evaluations, donor/recipient/United Nations evaluations, United Nations/recipient evaluations, United Nations/recipient/NGOs evaluations. Concerning some of those modalities, their potentials and their difficulties, see, for example, DAC, "Effective practices in conducting a multi-donor evaluation" (Paris, 2000), issue No. 4 of the OECD/DAC Evaluation and Aid Effectiveness series.

[36] In both resolutions, the Secretary-General was requested to undertake an evaluation of the impact of operational activities. The two series of country-level studies, conducted in 12 countries, focused in the first series on capacity-building and in the second on capacity-building and poverty eradication. Those studies were made in response to the demand of the General Assembly — in the triennial reviews of 1995 and 1998 — to complement the evaluation of the modalities and mechanisms that regulate the functioning of the system at the country level with an assessment of the development impact of operational activities.

[37] See also W. H. North, "Impact evaluations and the United Nations system", in *Capacity-building and Poverty Eradication: Some Analysis of and Lessons from Evaluations of United Nations system support to countries' efforts* (United Nations publication, forthcoming). Haven North is the former Chairman of the OECD/DAC Expert Group on Aid Evaluation and former head of the United States Agency for International Development Center for Development Information and Evaluation. See also R. Maconick, "Evaluating the impact of operational activities: some observations on the evaluation issues" in R. Maconick, ed., *Capacity-building Supported by the United Nations: Some Evaluations and Some Lessons* (New York, United Nations, 1999).

[38] At the country level, the information base on operational activities available was often inadequate and so was the system's institutional memory. The time period covered by those studies turned out to create problems for those preparing the evaluations and those carrying them out because of the non-availability of old records and knowledgeable people with good memories. The attribution of results to external contributions from the United Nations system was often impossible. Some of those difficulties were due to the way in which individual studies had been planned, with different coverage of programme activities and different sets of problems, situations and sectors, which made it impossible to conduct cross-country comparisons. Sometimes, the contribution of country teams to the preparation phase of those studies was inadequate in terms of the participatory approach to evaluation suggested in the present report in spite of the attempts to include national counterparts and beneficiary groups.

[39] The above-mentioned study of the World Bank on aid effectiveness concludes that because each country is unique, the role of aid can be understood best through careful analysis of individual countries.

[40] The 1990s offered a wide range of examples of joint consultations of this type, with the presence of headquarters and country-level representatives of United Nations system organizations, recipient Governments, donors and civil society. They were promoted by the Department of Economic and Social Affairs or its predecessors, often in collaboration with inter-agency mechanisms (either UNDG or, in the past, the ACC Consultative Committee on Programme and Operational Questions, currently replaced by the High-Level Committee on Programmes of CEB). They were functional to the discussion of results of evaluation missions and formulate system-wide guidelines to be implemented within the system or to suggest recommendations to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. Specific examples of the consultations are those that addressed such topics as national execution, the programme approach, the country strategy note, UNDAF, simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, best practices in the functioning of the resident coordinator system, and the role of the United Nations system in capacity-building and poverty eradication.

[41] In-country dialogue for the assessments requires a substantial re-engineering, with greater involvement of national authorities and system representatives, not to mention the other development stakeholders. See Jehan Raheem, "Impact of capacity-building" in *Capacity-building and Poverty Eradication: Some Analysis of and Lessons from Evaluations of United Nations System Support to Countries' Efforts* (United Nations publication, forthcoming).

[42] Stronger methodological preparation at the field level may be required.

[43] See W. H. North, op. cit., in particular the section on alternative approaches to United Nations system-wide impact evaluation.

Annex I

Focus areas of reports on operational activities for development

Reports of the last 12 years on operational activities focused on the following areas:

- **Global challenges to United Nations development cooperation**, including relations with globalization processes, follow-up to global conferences and the United Nations Millennium Declaration;
- **Substantive role of United Nations operational activities in specific development areas**, for example, human development (see A/47/419, sect. III), science and technology, research and development, and transfer of technology (see A/47/319/Add.1), gender,[a] poverty eradication[b] and capacity-building;[c]
- **Resources and funding for operational activities for development**, including trends in funding United Nations funds and programmes and their financial status, pledging mechanisms, multi-year funding frameworks and other funding arrangements of United Nations funds and programmes;
- **Integration of operational activities in national development efforts**, including collaboration with national Governments, dialogue with other national stakeholders, training and human resources development, and relations between national ownership and capacity-building and between national execution and capacity-building;
- **Programme coordination issues**, including the notion of an integrated operational response;[d] such modalities such as the programme approach;[e] a number of coordination processes, such as the harmonization of programming cycles; strategic and programming frameworks, such as the country strategy note,[f] the common country assessment and the United Nations development assistance framework; the relations of such frameworks with other schemes, such as common appeal processes, poverty reduction strategy papers, public investment or expenditure plans, sector-wide approaches and the country assistance strategy (World Bank); and other coordination arrangements, such as round tables and consultative group meetings;
- **Field-level coordination**, including strengthening national coordination mechanisms, support for external assistance coordination, the resident coordinator system, field-level committees, thematic groups, simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures, decentralization and delegation of authority, field structures and staff, common premises and shared services, specialized and technical agencies, accountability and coordination in monitoring and evaluation, and collaboration with international financial institutions, particularly with the Bretton Woods institutions;
- **Evolving dimensions of operations activities**, including gender mainstreaming in operational activities; regional dimensions; relations among relief assistance, rehabilitation, reconstruction efforts and development cooperation; technical and economic cooperation among developing countries;

relations with civil society and human rights, including the right to development; and information and communication technologies;

- **Intergovernmental oversight of operational activities**, including the role of the Economic and Social Council and its relations with the executive boards.

Notes

[a] A special theme for the operational activities segment of the Economic and Social Council in 1998 (see E/1998/100 and Council resolution 1998/26).

[b] A key topic in the operational activities segment of the Council in 1999 (see E/1999/55) and one of the main topics in the second series of impact evaluation studies.

[c] A recurrent subject in the assessment of the effectiveness of operational activities: it was a key theme in the 1992 triennial review (see A/47/419/Add.1), in the impact evaluation studies mandated by General Assembly resolution 50/120 and in the operational activities segment for 2002.

[d] Emerged from General Assembly resolution 44/211 and was discussed in the 1992 triennial review (see A/47/419).

[e] Addressed in General Assembly resolutions 47/192 and 50/120.

[f] Received special attention from 1992 to 1998.

Annex II

Short-term assessment activities: requests contained in General Assembly resolution 56/201

1. The **report requirements** defined in General Assembly resolution 56/201, which define the content of a short-term assessment programme on operational activities for development, are the following:

- **Capacity-building**: review of the efforts of United Nations system organizations in the capacity-building area (para. 28), due for the Economic and Social Council in 2002;
- **Lessons learning and evaluation mechanisms of the United Nations funds, programmes and agencies**: evaluation of the extent to which those organizations at the field level learn lessons from their evaluations, with proposals to improve feedback mechanisms at the country level (para. 56), due for the Economic and Social Council in 2003;
- **Simplification and harmonization of rules and procedures** for operational activities. Sub-themes: decentralization and delegation of authority; financial regulations; procedures for implementing programmes and projects, in particular requirements for monitoring and reporting; common shared services in country offices; and recruitment, training and remuneration of national project personnel (paras. 57-65). Reporting to the Economic and Social Council in 2002 is expected as regards the initiatives promoted, in particular on the programme of work adopted by the United Nations funds and programmes. Evaluation of achievements is expected for 2004;
- **Common country assessment and UNDAF**: evaluation of the progress of the common country assessment and UNDAF processes and their impact on operational activities (para. 47), as a part of the 2004 triennial review;
- **Pledging conferences**: alternative options on the pledging conferences (para. 26) for consideration by the General Assembly at its fifty-seventh session.

2. Moreover, a number of **principles** and concepts are highlighted in the resolution, which are considered essential in planning, implementing, coordinating and evaluating operational activities for development. They are key criteria for the assessment:

- **National ownership** of operational activities and their integration with national development efforts (para. 3);
- Country-level relevance of the international **commitments, goals and targets of the Millennium Declaration and major United Nations conferences**, and role of the United Nations development system in supporting national efforts to implement them (second preambular paragraph and paras. 6, 8, 10, 13, 38, 42 and 72);
- **Need for a participatory approach to United Nations development cooperation** as a condition for its sustainability, expressed both in terms of participation and leadership of national Governments and partnerships with all relevant development actors, within the system and with reference to

international national partners (third preambular paragraph and paras. 3, 4, 7, 31, 34, 35, 43, 44, 46, 49, 50, 54, 69, 70, 73, 76 and 78).

3. **Additional themes** identified in General Assembly resolution 56/201 which are relevant for the effectiveness of the operational activities include:

- Role of the United Nations system in assisting recipient countries in responding to the **challenges of globalization**, supporting their efforts to integrate in the world economy, to accelerate their economic growth and development and to reduce their poverty (para. 11);
- Role of the United Nations system in supporting the enhancement of developing countries' capacities in the areas of **information and communication technology** (para. 13);
- Request for **new trust funds** established by United Nations funds and programmes to be possibly multi-donor and not to the detriment of core/regular resources (para. 23);
- Importance of **disseminating expertise acquired through technical assistance** (para. 29);
- Fullest possible use of available **national expertise and indigenous technologies** (para. 30);
- Need to enhance **capacity of national Governments to coordinate external assistance** (para. 31);
- Need to enhance **evaluation capacities of recipient countries** (para. 49);
- Need to evaluate **transaction costs of coordination activities** borne by recipient countries and system organizations and assessment of costs as compared with total programme expenditures (para. 51);
- **Role of the resident coordinator system for an effective and efficient functioning of the United Nations system** at the country level, and as a key instrument of coordination of the system's operational activities for development (para. 66);
- **Role of the resident coordinator system to assist Governments in implementing the Millennium Declaration and outcomes of major United Nations conferences** (para. 72);
- **Broadening of the pool of resident coordinators** (gender balance, competitive assessment, system participation in the recruitment process and in the expression of new candidates) (para. 67);
- Use of the **United Nations Staff College** by the United Nations development system (para. 68);
- **Use of information and communication technologies (ICT) by the United Nations development system at the country level** as a means to support efficient delivery of development cooperation and harmonization of ICT platforms at the country and headquarters levels (paras. 69, 80 and 81);
- Progress in the area of **common premises and shared services** (e.g., para. 79, on common premises);

- **Collaboration with Bretton Woods institutions and other international financial institutions** (paras. 44, 70 and 77);
- **Regional dimensions** of operational activities and involvement of regional commissions (e.g., para. 88);
- Interaction between operational activities for development and **humanitarian assistance** (para. 82);
- **Mainstreaming gender dimensions** in operational activities for development (para. 85);
- **Use of technical and economic cooperation among developing countries** in operational activities for development (paras. 89 and 90).

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Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

Report of the President of the Council on consultations held with the Chairman of the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples**

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** The time of submission of this report to conference services was conditioned by the time the information was provided by the specialized agencies and organizations of the United Nations system.

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I. Introduction

1. At its substantive session of 2001, the Economic and Social Council adopted resolution 2001/28 of 26 July 2001 on the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations.

2. In paragraph 17 of its resolution 56/67 of 10 December 2001, the General Assembly requested the Council to continue to consider, in consultation with the Special Committee on the Situation with regard to the Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples, appropriate measures for coordination of the policies and activities of the specialized agencies and other organizations of the United Nations system in implementing the relevant resolutions of the Assembly.

3. Information submitted by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations on their activities in relation to Non-Self-Governing Territories is set out below.

II. Support to Non-Self-Governing Territories by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations

4. According to the information provided by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations, during the period under review a number of specialized agencies and organizations have continued to extend assistance to the peoples of Non-Self-Governing Territories in response to the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly, the Council and the Special Committee. A number of organizations have extended or formulated such programmes of assistance from within their own budgetary resources, in addition to their respective contributions as executing agencies of projects funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the primary provider of assistance.

5. A number of assistance projects have continued to be funded by UNDP, in close collaboration with other agencies and organizations.

A. Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean

6. Of the 17 Non-Self-Governing Territories, those maintaining an active relationship with the subregional headquarters in Port-of-Spain are Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands, Montserrat and the United States Virgin Islands. More recently, indications of interest have been received from the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands with respect to participation in the activities of the Caribbean Development and Cooperation Committee (CDCC). The Committee was established in 1975 as a permanent subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), to act as a coordinating body for whatever activities relating to development and cooperation may be agreed upon, and to serve as an advisory and consultative body to the Executive Secretary of ECLAC in respect of Caribbean issues and circumstances. The secretariat of the Committee is the secretariat of ECLAC acting principally through the subregional office in Port-of-Spain. The four Non-Self-Governing Territories indicated as maintaining an active relationship with the Port-of-Spain subregional headquarters are associate members of the Committee.

7. In the compilation of information for the present report, ECLAC's Port-of-Spain subregional headquarters has sought to consult the authorities of the Territories that maintain an active relationship with it, in an effort to ensure the validity of all information provided. The limited response obtained merely served to confirm the continuing relevance of the economic and social issues cited in the relevant resolutions, with emphasis on the fact that those instruments had been drafted on the basis of inputs from the Territories themselves.

8. A perusal of the relevant resolutions leads to the identification of the major economic and social issues as, inter alia:

(a) The promotion of the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the populations concerned;

(b) The need to ensure that economic activity has no negative impact on the interests of the populations;

(c) The need to promote the stability, diversification and strengthening of the economies of

the Territories, taking into account the special circumstances relating to their geographical location, size and economic conditions, as well as their vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental degradation;

(d) The need for foreign economic investment to be undertaken in collaboration with the respective peoples and in accordance with their wishes, in order to promote their socio-economic development;

(e) The threat posed to the integrity and prosperity of the Territories by the damaging exploitation and plundering of marine and other natural resources;

(f) The need to ensure that the permanent sovereignty of the peoples over their natural resources is fully respected;

(g) The need for the administering Powers to ensure that no discriminatory working conditions prevail in the respective Territories and the need to promote a fair system of wages applicable to all the inhabitants without discrimination.

9. Over the years, the Non-Self-Governing Territories that are associate members of CDCC have been among the most active elements of the Committee.

10. One of the major features of CDCC is its provision to the Non-Self-Governing Territories of access to the global forum that is the United Nations, as well as to its agencies and programmes, in which the Territories are able to promote and advance their developmental aspirations. Through this modality, the Territories are effectively integrated into the technical cooperation programmes of the United Nations system and of certain other intergovernmental organizations. In 1999, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat completed the implementation of the project, funded by the Government of the Netherlands to support ECLAC/CDCC associate member countries and other Caribbean non-independent countries in developing institutional linkages and accessing benefits from the United Nations system and other intergovernmental organizations. The project, which commenced in 1996, was successful in ensuring an increase in the participation of the Non-Self-Governing Territories in meetings and other activities of the United Nations system.

11. In this regard, the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat prepared two documents. The first considered aspects of the integration of the Non-Self-Governing Territories into the technical cooperation programmes of the United Nations system and other intergovernmental bodies, while the second provided an assessment of the participation of the Territories in the programmes and activities emanating from the programmes of action of the United Nations global conferences in the economic and social fields.

12. In the same vein, CDCC has been an ardent champion of the right of the Non-Self-Governing Territories, as associate members of ECLAC, to participate as observers in world conferences in the economic and social spheres. With this kind of support, the Non-Self-Governing Territories have been very active participants in such forums as the International Conference on Population and Development (1994), the Global Conference on Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States (1994), the World Summit for Social Development (1995), and the Fourth World Conference on Women (1995). The follow-up processes in connection with the implementation of the respective plans of action adopted at these global forums are also accessible to the Non-Self-Governing Territories.

13. Over the years, the Port-of-Spain subregional headquarters, in the execution of its mandate, has mounted official missions to Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat for the provision of advisory services and technical assistance, at the request of those Territories. Examples of the types of advice and assistance provided to the Non-Self-Governing Territories have included the preparation of post-disaster assessment reports following hurricanes (Anguilla); workshops on the methodology for conducting studies of the macroeconomic, social and environmental impacts of hurricanes and other natural disasters in the immediate post-disaster period (British Virgin Islands); the reformulation of a tourism sector plan in the wake of the volcanic eruption (Montserrat); and a review of the implications of the Revised Treaty of Chaguaramas establishing the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the CARICOM Single Market and Economy (Montserrat).

14. Information about other areas of support provided by the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat to the Non-Self-Governing Territories may be gleaned from its various publications, which have covered such themes as the

effects of sustained immigration in the Cayman Islands, the British Virgin Islands, St. Maarten and the United States Virgin Islands.

15. In the context of the responsibility of the Port-of-Spain subregional headquarters for the implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, the Non-Self-Governing Territories, as associate members, are among the Caribbean small island developing States on whose behalf, with this subregional headquarters functioning as the technical secretariat, a joint work programme extrapolated from the Programme of Action is implemented by an inter-agency collaborative group comprising more than two dozen regional and wider international agencies, including those of the United Nations system. Within these arrangements, efforts are made to integrate social, economic and environmental components of action for the sustainable development of these Territories.

16. At the nineteenth session of CDCC, which convened at the Port-of-Spain subregional headquarters on 14 and 15 March 2002, it was recommended that the ECLAC/CDCC secretariat resume the initiative commenced in the 1990s to promote the increased participation of the associate members in the activities of the wider United Nations system.

17. In this context, the Director of the subregional headquarters gave assurances that the Non-Self-Governing Territories known as non-independent Caribbean countries within CDCC would continue to be functionally integrated within the ECLAC/CDCC work programme. The Director also outlined a number of activities and projects that had been carried out with the Territories in the areas of natural disasters and trade, among others. He pointed out ECLAC's intention to intensify its outreach towards the Cayman Islands and the Turks and Caicos Islands, which have in recent times expressed an interest in becoming members of CDCC.

B. United Nations Conference on Trade and Development

18. The United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), through research and analysis on the structural handicaps and issues of vulnerability faced by small island developing States, supports these countries in their efforts to gain increased recognition from the international community, in particular in the multilateral trading system and in the sphere of development financing. In this work, UNCTAD takes into consideration all small island developing States with a population of less than 5 million, including non-self-governing small island developing States, which generally face socio-economic and vulnerability problems that are similar in nature to those of independent small island developing States. The main limitation commonly faced in incorporating non-self-governing small island developing States in relevant cross-country analysis is the scarcity of statistical data from the dependent island Territories.

19. In its work, UNCTAD takes into consideration the fact that the economic experience of some non-self-governing small island developing States, which have highly specialized economic activities such as tourism and offshore financial services, may be of interest to many self-governing small island developing States. The advocacy of a special treatment of small island developing States in relevant international arenas, by casting light on the structural problems they face, can benefit non-self-governing small island developing States, which also need a differentiated treatment from the perspective of their eventual accession to independence.

C. United Nations Development Programme

20. UNDP has provided programming support to British Overseas Territories — Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and Montserrat — in the context of their net contributor country status. In the face of limited country target for resource assignment from the core (TRAC) resources for programming, these countries have benefited indirectly from several Regional Activity Centre programmes. These include regional programmes pertaining to disaster management, tourism development, technical assistance on financial and economic issues, microenterprise development and building the capacity of the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS) secretariat. In addition, UNDP has supported the Territories in connection with specific country projects.

Anguilla

21. UNDP is providing programming support to Anguilla's Constitutional Reform Committee and for the restructuring of the Community Development Department. A low-input hydroponics project is nearing completion.

British Virgin Islands

22. There is currently no ongoing country project for the British Virgin Islands.

Montserrat

23. Following the volcanic activity in the mid-1990s, Montserrat was designated a country in special development circumstances. Support from the UNDP Barbados office and the OECS subregional office focuses on disaster mitigation and institutional strengthening. A project on disaster management and institutional strengthening in support of Montserrat's post-emergency resettlement programme, initiated in 1999, involves support for the Government of Montserrat through the placement of United Nations Volunteers in strategic physical and social infrastructure areas. At present, four international United Nations Volunteers are providing support in geographic information systems, architecture, occupational therapy with specific emphasis on support for the disabled and elderly, and psychology/community work. A fifth United Nations Volunteer will be joining as a civil engineer in April 2002. One Volunteer is fully funded by the Government of Japan, while the Department for International Development funds others. UNDP is also supporting the implementation of an integrated vulnerability assessment of the island. This assessment will provide guidance on disaster vulnerability for development planners and private sector initiatives over the next 25 years.

Cayman Islands

24. The Cayman Islands economy has grown during the 1990s as a result of rapid expansion in the tourism and financial services sectors, where real annual GDP growth averaged 5 per cent and per capita GDP reached $36,000 in 1999. However, since 1997 recurrent savings have declined. This led to increased borrowing by the Government to finance capital expenditure, which resulted in public debt of 9 per cent of GDP in 2000. Other development challenges included a shortage of skilled local labour, the need to sustain human development through economic diversity and environmental impacts associated with the rapid growth in tourism and real estate development. In the five-year cycle from 1997 to 2001, UNDP supported the Cayman Islands in building capacity to manage national development through education planning and management, socio-economic and demographic data collection for development planning, multidisciplinary training and the provision of technical advisory services.

St. Helena

25. The project on strengthening the capacity of the St. Helena Development and Economic Planning Department is aimed at assisting the Government of St. Helena by strengthening its capacity to plan and implement development projects for promoting long-term sustainable human development. Specifically, the Development and Economic Planning Department will be provided technical support so that it can enhance its ability to plan, manage and monitor development projects, particularly within the framework of the UNDP programme on the island. This will be accomplished through the training of office staff and through the production of the island's first national human development report, which the Development and Economic Planning Department and the Government at large can use as a framework for prioritizing national development efforts that are sponsored by the Government, public-private partnerships and international assistance.

- Executing agency: Development and Economic Planning Department
- Implementing agency: United Nations Office for Project Services
- Estimated start date: December 1997
- Estimated end date: 2002
- UNDP contribution: $227,000
- Total budget: $227,000

26. The goal of the project on tourism sector employment and private sector development is to generate long-term employment opportunities on St. Helena by stimulating the private sector through

development of the tourism industry. This will be achieved through a series of applied vocational training programmes in tourism-related services and small enterprise development. It will target recently unemployed persons and graduating students. It will also include people who are classified as community workers, unemployed or underemployed. As a part of the training, the participants will undertake small tourism-related projects that will improve the island's tourism product. In the long term, the project seeks to improve the marketability of St. Helena's tourism.

- Executing and implementing agency: Development and Economic Planning Department
- Estimated start date: November 1998
- Project end date: July 2001
- UNDP contribution: $557,600
- Total budget: $557,600

27. The purpose of the projection services and aid for the elderly and disabled, social development, social welfare and services is to minimize the institutionalization of elderly clients and to help them remain in their homes in the community. The project will focus on elderly persons who are care-dependent but who would otherwise be forced to move from their homes into sheltered accommodation. The project supports a survey of the homes in question, drawing up plans for the provision of aid services and carrying out installations as required.

- Executing and implementing agency: Development and Economic Planning Department
- Estimated start date: 1 March 2001
- Estimated end date: 31 December 2001
- UNDP contribution: $171,389
- Total budget: $171,389

Tokelau

28. The development assistance provided for Tokelau, a Territory of New Zealand consisting of three atolls with about 1,500 inhabitants, has focused on empowering the country's self-governing capabilities as it moves gradually towards free association with New Zealand. United Nations assistance was provided by UNDP and technical agencies such as the World Health Organization, the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Development Fund for Women, while bilateral aid has consistently been secured mainly from New Zealand. UNDP's governance and sustainable livelihood programmes are in direct line with the country's aim to develop national capacity in macrolevel management and decision-making infrastructure, as well as self-sufficiency in order to overcome the lack of resources resulting from such factors as reduced official development assistance from New Zealand. Its small size, remoteness from the mainstream of regional economic flows and geographical isolation continue to pose a challenge to the country in achieving its development goals. Vulnerability to natural disasters and environmental threats such as sea-level rise, coastal erosion and loss of biodiversity remain areas of concern to the country. The issue of the country's eligibility to become a signatory (and beneficiary) of the various international environmental conventions currently being addressed by the Global Environment Facility (GEF) (e.g., the Convention on Biological Diversity) remains a question of serious concern for the national authorities. GEF has indicated that Tokelau is not eligible for assistance under the various GEF trust funds since it is a Trust Territory of New Zealand and does not possess the legal authority to sign the international conventions on its own behalf. Given its vulnerability to hazardous environmental conditions, the Government of Tokelau has been advised to approach the GEF Chief Executive Officer to request consideration of its special circumstances and some access to the resources available or suggestions regarding other funding mechanisms. Some of the millennium development goals need attention, such as maternal health where mortality rates for women during childbirth remain relatively high. The joint mission of UNDP and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to Tokelau in September 2000 sought to facilitate implementation arrangements for the integration of the Modern House project, outlined through consultation between Tokelau and New Zealand authorities, into the UNDP governance project. The joint mission also addressed the question of technical backstopping by UNESCO for arrangements for the energy component of the project, with an emphasis on solar energy as a backup to diesel power. Bilateral assistance has been provided by new Zealand and Australia in transport, financial reform, education and other general development areas. With the small number of actors involved in the assistance to Tokelau, UNDP and New Zealand established a project in 2000 to link and rationalize their respective programmes,

and to formulate a national sustainable development plan. A national plan is still in the planning pipeline, to be funded by official development assistance from New Zealand.

Turks and Caicos Islands

29. The Turks and Caicos Islands economy grew strongly in the 1990s because of expansion in the tourism and offshore financial services sectors. Total government revenue increased from $22.5 million in 1991 to $73.2 million in 2001. As a result, the Government was able to fund more than 50 per cent of its development expenditure. Unfortunately, the rapid growth exacerbated existing development challenges and also resulted in new ones, such as spatial disparity, increased illegal immigration, overcrowding, housing shortages, pressure on the school system and health services, water scarcity and pressure on the fragile natural environment. In addressing the situation, the Government developed a medium-term strategic planning framework aimed at promoting the diversification of the economy, protection of the environment, employment generation and more equitable growth for all the islands. Under the 1998-2002 country cooperation framework, UNDP is providing support in the areas of governance and capacity development, and in the development of small-scale enterprises for income and employment creation.

D. World Food Programme

East Timor

30. During 2001, the World Food Programme (WFP) continued to provide food assistance to the vulnerable population of East Timor under a variety of projects, such as vulnerable group and institutional feeding programmes. In addition, WFP used food as an incentive for rehabilitation and capacity-building activities through food-for-work, food-for-training, school-feeding and other projects.

31. Ongoing monitoring of the food security situation in East Timor indicates no evidence of food insecurity, except at very localized levels. WFP, government officials and partners agreed that food aid interventions were not an appropriate response for the future of East Timor. In view of this conclusion, WFP decided to gradually withdraw from all operations in East Timor, with a projected final departure date of 30 June 2002.

Western Sahara

32. Tens of thousands of Western Saharans have taken refuge in Algeria since 1975, settling in temporary camps in a desert area near Tindouf. WFP has helped the Government of Algeria to meet the basic nutritional needs of the refugees since 1986. Pending the achievement of a durable solution for the refugee problems, the specific objective of WFP activities is to sustain the lives of the refugee-camp population through the timely delivery of basic food commodities. WFP has been providing food aid to 155,000 refugees under protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 6234, approved by the WFP Executive Board in May 2000. Women play an important role in food distribution and decision-making. In addition, they are direct recipients of the WFP food ration. Under this PRRO, WFP-supplied basic food commodities are distributed to the refugees by the Algerian Red Crescent Society, and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO), and international non-governmental organizations provide non-food items and supplementary food. ECHO has also established a three-month buffer stock facility to ensure availability of food at times when the WFP food pipeline is temporarily interrupted.

33. PRRO 6234, however, has received limited donor response, resulting in delivery delays and pipeline breakdowns. Consequently, there have been chronic imbalances in the refugees' monthly food intake. An estimated 95 per cent of the households in the camps have no independent means of meeting their food requirement or procuring fresh food. Malnutrition rates are high: it is estimated that 13 per cent of children under five are acutely malnourished and 5 per cent suffer from stunting. Anaemia afflicts about 44 per cent of children under five and more than 48 per cent of mothers.

34. Between March and July 2000 UNHCR conducted a preliminary registration exercise using the lists of eligible voters of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara. The results show that there are 155,430 refugees in the camps who continue to require humanitarian assistance. This includes about 4,000 children and 2,380 women suffering from various degrees of malnutrition. As this

PRRO is due to end in August, WFP has prepared a new PRRO that will be presented to the WFP Executive Board in May 2002. Under this new operation, WFP will provide assistance to the 155,430 refugees and will also provide supplementary feeding programmes for 6,380 malnourished children and vulnerable women, in close cooperation with the Algerian Government, UNHCR, ECHO, bilateral donors, non-governmental organizations and local camp authorities.

35. WFP directs its activities for Western Sahara from its Country Office in Algiers, with an international and national staff also monitoring activities from Tindouf. WFP does not operate within Western Sahara, but only within the sovereign territory of Algeria.

E. United Nations Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention

36. The Office for Drug Control and Crime Prevention addresses the issues of drug control and money-laundering in some Non-Self-Governing Territories.

37. More particularly, since 1996 the United Nations International Drug Control Programme has been delivering technical assistance to Caribbean Non-Self-Governing Territories in the context of projects to implement the Barbados Plan of Action for Drug Control Coordination and Cooperation in the Caribbean.

38. In this context, Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands received equipment and training to upgrade their forensic laboratory services for better prosecution and adjudication of drug offences. Further, customs administrations in Anguilla, Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Montserrat and the Turks and Caicos Islands received training and equipment enabling them to join a Caribbean-wide clearance system for small vessels and light aircraft, aimed at improving interdiction capabilities in enforcing drug laws.

39. In the area of crime prevention, the Global Programme against Money Laundering (GPML) of the Centre for International Crime Prevention has worked over the past year with Montserrat and Anguilla.

40. Moreover, GPML is currently finalizing a study of the feasibility of establishing a regional financial intelligence unit in OECS. Montserrat and Anguilla are members of this subgrouping and will be a part of the regional financial intelligence unit should it come into being. As a part of the study, the consultants assessed the legal framework for and operation of reporting authorities in both of these Territories.

41. While GPML has not undertaken work in the Cayman Islands or the British Virgin Islands, both of these Territories, as well as Anguilla and Montserrat, are members of the GPML Forum, which was established in 2000.

F. International Labour Organization

42. As regards the lists of international labour conventions declared applicable to the Territories under article 35 of the International Labour Organization (ILO) Constitution, there have been no changes from those supplied with last year's report. As regards the list of the 17 remaining such Territories, the ILO can report principally on its activities in East Timor in support of preparation for independence.

43. Two ILO-backed technical cooperation projects are now fully functioning in East Timor, one on strengthening and improving labour relations and the other on the promotion of East Timorese employability through the development of a vocational training and employability system. Detailed information on both these projects can be obtained on-line through the ILO web site, at www.ilo.org. Chief technical advisers are installed in Dili, and tripartite project advisory committees and local counterparts are working within the agreed work plans. The newly appointed Secretary of State for Labour and Solidarity, Arsenio Paixao Bano, has been highly supportive of both projects, the aim of which is to create conditions for decent work in the new country and to help the East Timorese to install a regulatory framework conducive to job creation.

44. As reported in 2001, activities to date for the labour relations project have been aimed at the three principal stakeholders, namely, the Department of Labour and Social Services, the workers' organizations, now confederated into the Confederation of Timorese Trade Unions, and the employers' organizations. The Labour Code (based to a large extent on ILO technical assistance on four draft

regulations in 2000 and 2001) is scheduled for adoption on 1 May 2002, having been adopted, after tripartite consultations, by the Constituent Assembly. In particular, section 9 of the Labour Code, on fundamental principles, gives effect to the ILO Declaration on Fundamental Principles and Rights at Work by providing that workers and employers shall have the right to freedom of association and collective bargaining; forced labour is prohibited; child labour is not permitted except in certain circumstances; and discrimination in employment and occupation, in particular as regards equal remuneration between women and men for work of equal value, is prohibited.

45. It should be noted that the new Constitution contains strong provisions regarding workplace rights. Various generic ILO training materials, including modules on gender equality, have been identified as valid, with adaptation, for capacity-building in East Timor, and are consequently being translated into local languages and printed in large numbers for use in such activities. Regarding the project's objective of creating a system for the prevention and resolution of labour disputes, no detailed training on the new mechanisms can be provided until the new legal framework is in place. A summary of the Labour Code has been prepared and translated into local languages in preparation for a series of short workshops on the basic concepts included in the text, such as the importance of social dialogue for healthy labour relations. The ILO has also organized a number of capacity-building workshops for the employers' and workers' organizations.

46. The skills and employability project has centred its initial activities on identifying priority needs, as well as on the institutions already active and in a position to deliver appropriate vocational training. It is envisaged that the two projects will work closely together so that the synergies and enrichment of both can give added value to the ILO's presence in East Timor.

47. As stated in last year's report, some of the Territories continue to benefit from ILO technical and advisory services through the ILO Caribbean Multidisciplinary Team in Port-of-Spain, and participate in ILO-sponsored subregional meetings and seminars.

G. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

48. The Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) continued to carry out its general work to assist the small island developing States following the 1999 Special Ministerial Conference on Agriculture in Small Island Developing States, which was held at FAO headquarters. FAO maintains a fisheries database and has also been active in organizing a number of seminars and workshops over the past 24 months in Bermuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Turks and Caicos Islands and New Caledonia.

49. In addition, FAO has been active in preparing for the forthcoming World Summit on Sustainable Development. It has also continued its normative and operational work and its support for food security and safety, sustainable development, agriculture, the fisheries sector and the forestry sector.

H. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Tokelau

50. Tokelau joined UNESCO as an associate member at the thirty-first session of the General Conference, in October 2001, at the end of the last biennium. Tokelau has not yet participated in any programme activities.

51. However, prior to membership, Tokelau received extrabudgetary help from the UNESCO Office at Apia, as follows:

(a) In-service teacher training in all three of its schools, 1998-2000 (New Zealand official development assistance funding: $40,000).

(b) Participation in the Associated Schools Project network (ongoing project); participants from Tokelau attended 4 workshops (about $3,000).

(c) Capacity-building for power management (UNDP funding: $10,000, ongoing project).

Notes

[1] *Report of the Global Conference on the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States, Bridgetown, Barbados, 25 April-6 May 1994* (United Nations publication, Sales No. E.94.I.18 and corrigenda), chap. I, resolution I, annex II.